

American

NEWS & VIEWS

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New START Enhances U.S.-Russian Relations

By Merle David Kellerhals Jr.
Staff Writer

Washington — A new nuclear arms reduction treaty will foster a stable, open and predictable relationship between the United States and Russia, who together possess more than 90 percent of the world's nuclear weapons, top leaders in the Obama administration say.

At a Senate hearing June 17, Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton said the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START), signed by President Obama and Russian President Dmitry Medvedev in Prague April 8, reduces global nuclear tensions and enhances efforts to make irresponsible governments accountable to the rest of the world.

"By bringing the New START Treaty into force, we will strengthen our national security more broadly, including by creating greater leverage to tackle a core national security challenge: nuclear proliferation," Clinton told a Senate committee. The treaty does not compromise nuclear force levels needed to protect the United States and its allies, and it does not constrain missile-defense plans, Clinton added.

Clinton, Defense Secretary Robert Gates, Energy Secretary Stephen Chu and Admiral Mike Mullen, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, testified before the Senate Armed Services Committee on the arms control pact. The treaty replaces the 1991 Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty and the 2002 Moscow Treaty.

Senate Armed Services Chairman Carl Levin, a Democrat from Michigan, reminded committee members that the U.S. Senate has previously approved 10 bilateral arms control agreements with Russia and, before that, the Soviet Union, by overwhelming margins. Approval of the treaty by the U.S. Senate requires a vote of two-thirds of the membership, or 67 votes. The Russian Duma must also approve the treaty.

"This New START Treaty supports a credible nuclear deterrent and maintains the nuclear triad while allowing both the United States and Russia to reduce the total number of nuclear weapons," Levin said.

Republican Senator John McCain of Arizona said the treaty has to be verifiable, should not limit future missile defense plans, and should ensure that the future U.S. nuclear arsenal is maintained and modernized to provide for an adequate deterrent force.

The landmark START between the United States and Russia lowers the limits on strategic nuclear warheads

and the means to deliver them. It effectively reduces the level of warheads each nation possesses to its lowest level in more than 50 years.

Gates told senators that the U.S. nuclear forces will continue to be based on the triad of delivery systems — land-based intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs), submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs), and strategic long-range bombers. The treaty provides an upper boundary of 1,550 deployed warheads for each nation, and up to 700 deployed ICBMs, deployed SLBMs or heavy bombers. Additionally, the treaty would permit up to 800 deployed and nondeployed missile and submarine launchers or heavy bombers.

"Under this treaty, we retain the power and the freedom to determine the composition of our force structure, allowing the United States complete flexibility to deploy, maintain and modernize our strategic nuclear forces in a manner that best protects our national security interests," Gates testified.

Mullen told senators that the proposed arms reduction treaty has the full support of the U.S. armed forces, and that it does three key things — allows the United States to keep a strong and flexible nuclear deterrent; helps strengthen openness in relations with Russia; and shows the world the U.S. commitment to reducing the risk of a nuclear incident caused by the irresponsible spread of nuclear weapons from others.

The United States also is working for Senate ratification of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty and further progress on the Fissile Material Cutoff Treaty as additional components of the president's nuclear agenda.

According to a report from the U.S. Congressional Research Service (CRS), the treaty gives the United States and Russia seven years to reduce forces and remains in force for 10 years from ratification, and it contains detailed definitions and counting rules that will help the parties calculate the number of warheads that count under the treaty limits.

"New START does not limit current or planned U.S. missile defense programs," the CRS report said.

Along with the New START, Obama also submitted a plan to spend \$80 billion over the next decade to maintain and improve the United States' nuclear weapons complex, a requirement Republican senators have said is essential for their support of the treaty.

United States Commits to Strengthening Asia-Pacific Trade

Partnership talks provide forum to integrate economic strategies

By Alexis R. Carter

Staff Writer

Washington — The U.S. commitment to expanding, dynamic, robust trade partnerships with Asia-Pacific economies is being reaffirmed in the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) negotiations in San Francisco.

The talks, scheduled for June 14–18, address the proposed expansion of the multi-economy free trade zone created in 2006 by Singapore, New Zealand and Chile that promotes regionwide economic cooperation. Representatives of current TPP members — Australia, Brunei, Chile, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore, Vietnam and the United States — are working on revising and refining the TPP.

In advance of the meeting, U.S. negotiator and Assistant U.S. Trade Representative Barbara Wiesel briefed interested parties on the meeting agenda, which includes discussion of the U.S. plan to address investment issues between the new TPP agreement and pre-existing free trade agreements (FTAs) and the U.S. process for consultation with Congress when additional countries join the TPP talks, among other issues.

According to the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) TPP site, the goals for the San Francisco meeting include determining a framework for market access negotiations and the relationship between the TPP agreement and pre-existing FTAs, and defining a path forward on so-called “horizontal” issues, including small business priorities, regulatory coherence, competitiveness, supply chains, development and regional integration.

Representatives also are discussing how much progress they can achieve at the San Francisco meeting. The third round of TPP talks is scheduled for October.

BUILDING ON FOUNDATIONS LAID IN SAPPORO, JAPAN

The San Francisco meeting built on progress made during the annual Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) ministers’ retreat, held June 5 and June 6 in Sapporo, Japan, where trade representatives from APEC economies met to develop new economic strategies and negotiate interconnected economic policies. Deputy USTR Demetrios Marantis headed the U.S. delegation, replacing USTR Ron Kirk, who had been injured in a June 2 car accident.

In Sapporo, U.S. Ambassador to the World Trade Organization (WTO) Michael Punke opened the ministers’ retreat by encouraging APEC support for the

Doha Trade Agenda (also known as the Doha Round), a proposed initiative aimed at lowering global trade barriers and promoting fair market access for all WTO member economies. Punke praised the United States’ dedication to creating innovative ways to promote equal trade relationships in the region through many venues, including the APEC conference.

In his remarks, Marantis highlighted APEC’s achievements, which included increasing cost efficiency of trade-related activities for APEC partners within the Asia-Pacific trade zone, lowering standard trade barriers, and supporting trade in eco-friendly services and goods. According to USTR, APEC economies account for 60 percent of U.S. exports, with a value of about \$1 trillion.

Marantis also congratulated all APEC members for their progress toward the Bogor Goals. Established in 1994 in Bogor, Indonesia, the goals aim to “support growth and prosperity in the Asia-Pacific region, through free and open trade and investment,” according to the 1994 APEC Economic Leaders’ Declaration. The goals call for free trade among APEC’s developed member economies by 2010 and among all members by 2020.

Discussion of the Trans-Pacific Partnership was high on the ministers’ agenda at the Sapporo meeting. Through the TPP, the United States aims to heighten its connections with vibrant economies of the Asia-Pacific region. Marantis said the United States is pursuing trade pacts that ensure basic worker rights and protection and responsible environmental stewardship while responding to global challenges.

The deputy trade representative met individually with his counterparts from several nations to outline specific U.S. export goals in Asia-Pacific economies, such as access for sales of U.S. pharmaceuticals in Indonesia.

Marantis concluded the Sapporo meeting by urging APEC economies to strengthen their ability to address the needs of local businesses and workers. He called on the forum to continue support for efforts by the United States and other member economies “to grow jobs at home, open markets and promote the needs and interests of small and medium-sized businesses.”

The United States will host the 2011 APEC trade ministers’ conference in Big Sky, Montana, and is eager to maintain the momentum achieved at the meeting in Japan, Marantis said.

Later in his travel in the region, Marantis expressed optimism about the future of APEC. Before an audience at the Foreign Trade University in Hanoi, Vietnam, Marantis said the United States sees the 2011 APEC conference “as a chance to remind Americans of the importance of our

relationship with the dynamic Asia-Pacific, including Vietnam — and also a chance for major advances in APEC. Building together on the accomplishments of 2010, we wish to construct a framework that will keep APEC's trade and investment agenda on the cutting edge for the next 20 years."

New U.S. Program Taps Science to Battle World Hunger

Clinton announces Borlaug Commemorative Research Initiative
By Kathryn McConnell
Staff Writer

Washington — A new U.S. agricultural research initiative will foster improvements in farm production, nutrition and incomes for families around the world, said Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton.

The initiative, called the Norman Borlaug Commemorative Research Initiative, will tap resources of the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) to address problems faced by smallholder farmers around the world. The initiative is named for Norman Borlaug, whose work developing high-yield, disease-resistant wheat led to the Green Revolution of the 1960s and 1970s, a period during which millions of people were spared starvation. The latest initiative, Clinton said, will be part of the government's Feed the Future efforts to make food more available in developing countries by helping their agriculture sectors.

"Investing in science is not only an imperative, it is also a thrilling opportunity," Clinton said. "Scientists in our country and across the world are doing dazzling work."

Research will be directed to global food security and to the immediate problem of food access for the most vulnerable populations, at a time when more than 1 billion people live with chronic hunger, U.S. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said, and it "is a fitting way to honor the memory of Dr. Borlaug, whose work demonstrated the incredible capacity of innovation and scientific research to combat hunger across the globe."

Clinton said to support more international agricultural research, the Obama administration is asking Congress to approve a nearly 50 percent increase in funding for fiscal year 2011.

USAID Administrator Rajiv Shah, who also spoke at the June 16 announcement of the initiative and of the winners of the 2010 World Food Prize, said that during a recent regional meeting he attended in Senegal, African governments asked for continued investments in new agricultural tools and technologies and more investment

in research. "We are responding to their requests by redoubling our efforts to fight poverty and hunger through research and innovation," Shah said.

Clinton cited an example in East Africa, where drought every few years destroys significant amounts of the maize harvest, harming supplies of a regional staple. The United States already supports scientists at research institutions in Kenya and Uganda who are developing varieties of maize that will grow when there is little or no rain. Researchers in those two countries are testing new seeds adapted to local growing conditions and are reaching out to involve farmers in Zambia, Mozambique and Tanzania, Clinton said.

"We estimate that breakthroughs like that would help 4 million people escape poverty and increase farmers' income by half a billion dollars a year," Clinton said.

Another success story is told by the research being done at the University of California-Davis and the International Rice Research Institute in the Philippines; the two institutions are jointly working to develop new strains of flood-tolerant rice, Clinton said.

According to Clinton, the initiative just announced will include research on livestock and their diseases — such as East Coast Fever, which kills 1 million cattle every year in Africa. It will include improving inexpensive technologies such as no-till farming, which prevents soil erosion and has already been adopted by thousands of farmers in Asia with U.S. support. Other details of the initiative include a training program for scientists in other countries and a doubling of funding for the African Women in Agricultural Research and Development program.

U.S., Nigeria Focus on Renewable Energy

U.S.-Nigeria Binational Commission's Energy and Investment Group meets

By Charles W. Corey
Staff Writer

Washington — Advancing renewable energy in Nigeria was the focus of the first-ever meeting of the U.S.-Nigeria Binational Commission's Energy and Investment Working Group, held at the State Department June 10-11. The United States and Nigeria signed joint communiqués on renewable energy, and the United States pledged to do all it can to help Nigeria achieve a greater level of energy independence — which is key to its long-term economic growth and development.

At a ceremony June 11 marking the conclusion of the talks, the U.S. coordinator for international energy affairs, David L. Goldwyn, and the permanent secretary of Nigeria's Federal Ministry of Petroleum Resources,

Elizabeth B.P. Emuren, signed a joint communiqué to advance renewable energy opportunities in Nigeria.

Goldwyn told those in attendance that the first meeting of the working group shows that the United States and Nigeria are partners in many areas, including trade, regional security and energy security. Electric power is essential to Nigeria's economic growth and development, he stressed.

For two days, Goldwyn said, the group focused their discussions on electric power, gas, energy efficiency, renewable energy and fundamental areas of reform such as power generation, transmission, distribution and gas supply. The group also addressed how change will happen in the country's power sector and "what needs to happen in order for more electricity to be delivered in an affordable way."

Key elements were identified for change, he said, including "the introduction of market pricing ... cost-recovery tariffs, and ... a clear regulatory and institutional framework" that will allow investors to make investments. Goldwyn said the United States was "delighted to get really extensive presentations from Nigeria ... detailing the path forward ... and how those changes will happen and the time calendar on which they will happen."

"From a U.S. government perspective," he said, "we are happy to help in any way that we can and we are going to help in a number of ways," particularly through the efforts of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID).

Independent power producers will be the key to Nigeria's power development, he said, as he also praised Nigeria for moving to reform its petroleum sector to include increased transparency.

Speaking for Nigeria, Minister Emuren called the working group's deliberations "extensive and fruitful."

Emuren agreed that "energy is the key to any development" in a nation and that Nigeria is no exception. She thanked the United States for its willingness to provide advisory and technical assistance to Nigeria in the areas of capacity development, research and help" with Nigeria's petroleum sector.

(Katherine Sierra, the World Bank's vice president for sustainable development, recently told the Corporate Council on Africa's 2010 Africa Infrastructure Conference that electric power is a major issue across the entire African continent. "The entire capacity for electric power in sub-Saharan Africa — with its 48 countries and population of 800 million — is not more than Spain, with

a population of 40 million."

Only one-fifth of Africa's population has access to electricity or modern forms of energy, compared to one-half of the population in South Asia and four-fifths in Latin America, she said.)

Also during the ceremony, the director of the United States Trade and Development Agency (USTDA), Leocadia I. Zak and Ifeyinwa Ikeonu, the head of Nigerian Electricity Regulatory Commission's Strategy and Project Management Office, signed a \$323,000 grant agreement under which USTDA will fund technical assistance to develop a framework for renewable energy independent power in Nigeria.

In a written statement, Zak said: "This grant agreement represents a mutual commitment by both the United States and Nigeria to continue cooperation to facilitate investment and improve the transparency, administration, and performance of Nigeria's private sector. Establishing clear and transparent requirements for renewable independent power producer investments in Nigeria will enable an environment for the U.S. private sector to compete for business in a growing market ..." she said.

Commenting on the state of the U.S.-Nigeria bilateral relationship, Goldwyn described it as "strong and very deep" and said that Nigeria is a great friend and ally of the United States. Speaking for the Nigerians, the Nigerian ambassador to the United States, Adebawale Ibidapo Adefuye, termed the relationship very strong and profitable for both nations. The working group expects to convene for follow-up meetings in Nigeria at a later date.

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